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ABSTRACT

Annotations of 12 articles and a research report discuss procedures for selecting principals and other school administrators and examine the hiring process from the viewpoints of both the candidates and those doing the hiring. Three articles describe model selection processes and note the problems involved in job interviews, letters of recommendation, and impulsive hiring decisions. Two articles and a special journal issue report on assessment centers, including that of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and look at the simulation techniques used in the centers. Principal selection from the candidate's viewpoint is presented in three further articles, one narrating a day of interviewing for a fictitious applicant and the others raising questions about "hidden agendas" and "old boy networks" in the hiring process. One article describes how a British Columbia (Canada) school system develops administrators from within the district, and an article and the research report review the factors and characteristics of candidates emphasized by administrators in selecting principals. (RW)

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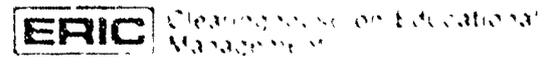
THE BEST OF ERIC

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The Best of ERIC presents a selection of ERIC literature on important topics in educational management.

The selections are intended to give educators easy access to the most significant and useful information available from ERIC. Because of space limitations, the items listed should be viewed as representative rather than exhaustive of literature meeting these criteria.

Materials were selected for articles from the ERIC catalogs Resources in Education, ERIC and Current Index to Journals in Education.



Principal Selection

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ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management

Principal Selection

Bowser, John D. A Study of the Needs of New York Principals. The Council on Educational Administration, 1979. 54 p. Available from ERIC, ED 189 974.

The author, who has worked as a principal, discusses a study of the needs of principals in this state. He discusses the study, including the experiences of principals in New York state, and the working theory for a principal's needs. He also discusses the needs of principals in other states and the implications for the study.

New York is the only state in the United States that has a principal's union. The author discusses the reasons for this and the implications for the study. He also discusses the needs of principals in other states and the implications for the study.

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Bruce, C. A. A Study of the Needs of Principals. The Council on Educational Administration, 1979. 54 p. Available from ERIC, ED 189 974.

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Each January, nominations for the executive development program are sought from teachers, principals, and central adminis-

trators. Some of these nominations are selected for a study of the needs of principals in New York state and the implications for the study. He also discusses the needs of principals in other states and the implications for the study.

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Bryant, B. J., Lawlis, Parker, Nicholson, Everett, and Maher, Batt P. Improving the Quality of School Administration. The Council on Educational Administration, 1979. 54 p. Available from ERIC, ED 189 974.

What qualities describe principals who are important in a principal's role? This is the question that is asked in this study. The author discusses the needs of principals in New York state and the implications for the study.

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A copy of Volume 1 of The Best of the Best of ERIC is due from the press at the end of May. The new volume compiles and updates issues forty-one through sixty of The Best of ERIC, twenty topics in all.

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two-day program at the district assessment center. Before helping district administrators identify candidates with the skill needed to be successful principals, the assessors of center give candidates and the district's administrators a chance to get to know each other, and provide candidates with an opportunity to judge their own performance and improve their job skills.

During the two-day program, four mini-exercises are conducted to solve the principal's problem: a group of six candidates analyze a typical problem facing school principals, and then draft an outline of their proposed solution. Evaluators judge candidates on their problem-solving, decision-making, and communication skills.

In another exercise, candidates view a fifteen-minute videotape of a teacher's lesson, analyze the lesson, prepare a strategy for a teacher conference, and then meet with the teacher. During the process, say the authors, assessors note a candidate's specific skills in lesson plan and analysis and judge the candidate's ability to conduct a teacher conference. The other main exercises are a ten-minute oral presentation on an assigned topic, and an in-basket exercise, in which candidates are given a packet of materials and are asked to assign priorities, make recommendations, and supply a rationale for each suggested action.

Meese, Mary Lou "Superintendents Who Shoot from the Hip on Hiring Decisions Sometimes Blow Off Their Own Toes." *American School Board Journal* 168:9 (September 1981), pp. 40-41. EJ 251 024

Superintendents who hire administrators impulsively, without consulting important others in the district, sometimes make brilliant choices. Just as often, though, says Meese, they hire "smooth-talking, savvy but incompetent opportunists" whose presence is felt, and regretted, long after their departure from the school system.

A promising alternative to this unilateral and thus unpredictable method of hiring administrators is to spread the responsibility for hiring among a group of district personnel and clients. Meese here describes one such committee-based system, which has been successfully utilized in the Bedford (New York) public school district.

Once the application deadline for a position has passed, a small group of administrators screens the candidates' application materials to make sure they meet the basic requirements of the job. Remaining applicants are then interviewed by a thirteen- to seven-member committee. Included in the committee are administrators, parents, representatives of various academic disciplines

and other interested parties, and a representative of the community.

The authors note that the committee-based system is not a "magic" way to find the best administrator. The committee must be carefully selected, the application process must be carefully supervised, and the committee must be given the opportunity to explore the responsibilities of the position. The authors also note that the committee-based system is not a "quick fix" for the problem of hiring administrators. It is a long-term solution that requires a commitment to the process.

Finally, the authors note that the committee-based system is not a "one-size-fits-all" solution. It may not be appropriate for all districts, and it may not be appropriate for all positions.

Van der Ven, A. J. "The Assessment Center: A New Approach to Hiring School Administrators." *Journal of Educational Administration* 19:3 (1981), pp. 19-21. EJ 251 025

The authors propose that the quality of school administration can be improved if the way in which administrators are hired is changed.

The traditional method of hiring school administrators has been to have a group of administrators, usually from the district, evaluate candidates. The authors note that this method is often subjective and biased. They propose a new method of hiring school administrators, called the "assessment center." The assessment center is a process in which candidates are evaluated on a variety of tasks that are representative of the job. The authors note that the assessment center is a more objective and fair method of hiring school administrators.

The introductory article of the group describes the NASSP Assessment Center Project, and the use of assessment centers in the next four articles, written by participants who were trained by the NASSP, and by participants in the center, describe the experiences of participants of four of the districts that have set up their own assessment centers. A final article describes preliminary research aimed at validating the effectiveness of assessment centers.

In a working assessment center, twelve participants (often a spring administrator) are observed for two days by assessors as they perform a variety of specially designed activities. Performance in the activities is used to assess skills in twelve areas: job problem analysis, organizational ability, leadership, personal motivation, educational values, and written communication skills. The assessors, after discussing and rating each participant's skills, write a comprehensive report and then share their findings with each participant in a private feedback session.

The evaluations developed by the assessment centers have already been used to help make hiring decisions, with the district reporting "great satisfaction with the quality of the school administrator selected as a result of superior performance in the center. Ancillary benefits of the centers have also been noted. Assessors uniformly report that they are better administrators because of their involvement; districts can be more honest with potential candidates because of their objective appraisal; and participants often for the first time receive candid and direct appraisal of their performance and potential.

Newberry, Alan J. H. "What Not to Look for in an Elementary School Principal." *National Elementary School Principals Association Bulletin* 41 (March-April 1977), pp. 41-43. EJ 15 047

Currently used practices for selecting elementary school principals, says Newberry, are often unsystematic, based on myths, and unsupported by research. Together, these irrational approaches have created no less than a crisis in the selection of elementary school principals.

Numerous studies have been conducted, however, to determine reliable practices and criteria for selecting quality principals. Newberry here reviews the findings of these studies and suggests that school districts use them as the basis for a rational, research-based

of formal procedures.

As factor 1, we have already identified the key components predicting future success: the principalship, length of professional experience, and a complex set of specific, contextual, individual factors. Now we can begin to make a list of individual factors. Newsberry's study suggests that an applicant's educational credentials are the most critical independent variables and graduate course completion is a good indicator of the candidate.

Newsberry goes on to suggest that professional judgment is a criterion that would assess a candidate's competence relative to the ideal, though that further research is needed to determine the validity of the criterion. Personal criteria have been suggested include intelligence, group skills, social skills, administrative judgment, gess health, and personal security. Professional criteria include skill in human relations, communication, community relations, decision making, research, counseling, leadership, and implementing change, and technical administration.

School systems should develop criteria to measure these criteria. Newsberry concludes using a combination of interview, biographical data forms, applicant testing, and reference checks. Included are several interview questions that could be used to test some of the criteria.

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Rosser Phyllis "Women Fight 'Old Boy' for School Administrator Jobs." *Teaching*, B (March 1990), pp. 31-32, 34, 41, 43, 44.

In 1990, when educational administration was considered a respectable female profession, 25 percent of elementary principals were women. Today, however, only 18 percent of the nation's elementary principalships are held by women. The figure for secondary principalships and superintendence are even lower: 4 percent and less than 1 percent, respectively. What happened to women's role in running the "boys' Rosser asks. And what can be done to reverse it?

The causes of the decrease in women administrators are many, and are tied to such events as the Great Depression, the return of veterans to the work force after the war, and the social climate of the 1950s and early 1960s. During the 1950s, the women's movement raised women's career aspirations, but by that time, women faced a job market that had ceased expanding and that had fallen under control of a system known as the "old boy network." Male administrators and even textbook authors

wrote about the "need" of about opening up administrative positions to women. The profession was once considered so "male" that the "old boy network" was a term of abuse, which referred to the "old boys" who had been in the profession for a long time. A lot of women did get into the field, but many were often employed in lower-level positions from friends and acquaintances who are part of the network. These potential women administrators should attempt to get recognized and recommended by traditional network members so they could plug into what Rosser calls the "old boy network." He also explains several approaches to gaining entry into the network and describes several programs designed to increase the selection of women for administrative positions.

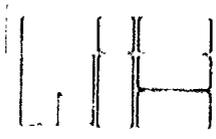
Iesulowski, Dennis G., and Morgan, Thomas J. "Selecting Educational Administrators: The Selection Center Technique." *NASSP Bulletin*, 44, 10 (February 1980), pp. 10-11, 14, 1000.

The authors initially present a list of techniques for selecting educational administrators. In the personal performance method, selection is based on a simplified listing of the board and council members. In the group method, candidates are the members of a group who do the work in teams of potential managers, are closely examined to see if they resemble the behaviors of successful managers. And in both the structural characteristics approach and the skill approach, tests of aptitude and skill are used to predict future success.

Some of the selection methods used and who utilized them are cited by Iesulowski and Morgan. The selection of principals is a complex task and requires an in-depth assessment of both knowledge and attitude. The in-depth analysis can be provided by a relatively new individual selection procedure that is simpler, reliable, and more accurate than most other systems.

In the selection center technique, the procedure involves managerial candidates are equipped in a variety of real life situations while their skill and performance are recorded by a number of trained evaluators. Using a number of evaluators, the authors explain, tend to cancel out judgment errors in the selection process.

A selection center is a variety of techniques for assessing administrative competence. External interviews are used to gain insight into candidates' attitudes, skills, and development. Candidate group exercises are used to assess interpersonal skills. Business game and industry exercises test administrative competence. And strong written tests assess skill, attitude, and general knowledge.

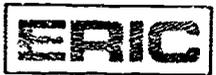


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Besides processing documents and journal articles, the Clearinghouse prepares bibliographies, literature reviews, monographs and other interpretive research studies on topics in its educational area.

Prior to publication, this manuscript was submitted to the Association of California School Administrators for critical review and determination of professional competence. The publication has met such standards. Points of view or opinions, however, do not necessarily represent the official view or opinions of the Association of California School Administrators.



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